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Notes

XENOPHON AND TASSO

Many teachers find the *Anabasis* too prosaic to be read with pleasure by beginners. It is true that Xenophon's writings made little impression upon the poets of Greece and Rome who lived after him, although rhetoricians cited by Cicero (*Orator*, 62; see Muencher in *Philologus*, Supplementband XIII.II [1920], 60) said *Xenophontis voce Musas quasi locutas*, and at least three great Roman poets are thought to have borrowed from him. Servius tells us that Vergil in the *Georgics* used many ideas from the *Oeconomicus*; Horace is thought to have had in mind a passage from the *Memorabilia* when he wrote *Ars. Poet.* 312 ff., and in Lucan (I, 281) is found a phrase resembling, in its thought, a line in the *Cyropaedia* (Muencher, 84, 85, 90). In view of this it may be of interest to compare a famous description in the *Anabasis* with an *octave* from the masterpiece of Tasso.

In the *Anabasis* (I, 8.8) the first sight of the vast army of Artaxerxes is thus described: "Towards late afternoon there appeared in view a cloud of dust, like a white cloud, and some time after this a sort of blackness, as it were, on the plain of vast extent. [The contrast between white and black is of the sort that Homer loves to mark]. As they drew nearer quickly then a piece of bronze here and there would flash [*ἤσπραπτε*, like lightning, from the blackness], and lances and the formations could be distinguished."

With this compare, *Gerusalemme*, III, 9 [The approach of Godfrey's army is descried from the walls of Jerusalem]:

"Meanwhile from the city a watchman standing on a high tower and scanning the hills and the plains, saw down there below, the dust rise like a huge cloud imprinted on the air. This cloud seemed to flash and burn, as though pregnant with flame and lightning. Then he saw the gleaming of the bright metals, and distinguished the men and the horses."

Whether Tasso, who had mastered Latin and was still more at

home in Greek (Fabroni) before he was twelve years old, had in mind the battle of Cunaxa when he wrote the above is of course an open question; the two passages are certainly similar and both are poetic.

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ON TESTING UNGUENTS

In the house of the Vettii at Pompeii, there are several charming paintings of Cupids and Psyche engaged in work and play. At the left of one of them, which is illustrated in Mau-Kelsey, *Pompeii, Its Life and Art* (second edition), p. 332, is depicted a seated Psyche who is holding the back of her wrist to her nose. On either side stands a Cupid facing her. Sogliano, *Monumenti Antichi*, VIII, 352-354, regards the Psyche as a patient and the Cupids as physicians.

In the Roman section of the *Mittheilungen*, XV, 138-141, Mau takes issue with this interpretation and easily convinces the reader that the scene is a logical part of the entire picture, which represents the manufacture and sale of oil. The Psyche is a purchaser and is holding some perfumed oil on the back of her hand to test it.

Literary confirmation of Mau's views is to be found in Pliny's Natural History 13.20, from which we learn that it was the custom to test unguents on the back of the hand because of the greater heat of the palm. The Latin runs as follows: Experimentum eorum (unguentorum) inversa manu capitur, ne carnosae partis calor vitiet.

Further corroboration is provided by a passage from Theophrastus, *De Odoribus*, 53: "However there is one question which applies to all perfumes, namely, why it is that they appear to be sweetest when the scent comes from the wrist; so that perfumers apply the scent to this part" (Hort's translation).

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